AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-4 (cancelled)

Claims 5 (currently amended): A method for oxidizing and/or decomposing organic and/or inorganic oxidizable substances in waste water by wet oxidation with a use of a catalyst, which comprises:

oxidizing and/or decomposing the oxidizable substances with an oxygen containing gas in the presence of the catalyst under pressure, which produces an exhaust gas, wherein the waste water remains in a liquid phase at a temperature of 50 to less than 170°C, wherein the catalyst contains activated carbon and at least one element selected from the group consisting of Pt, Pd, Rh, Ru, Ir and Au, and wherein the catalyst contains pores having a pore diameter in a range of 0.1 to 10 μm and a specific pore volume in a range of 0.1 to 0.8 ml/g;

and controlling the concentration of oxygen in the exhaust gas in a range of 0 to 5 vol%.

Claim 6 (cancelled)

Claim 7 (previously presented): The method according to claim 5, wherein the catalyst further contains at least one element selected from the group consisting of Ti, Zr, Hf, Nb, Ta, Fe, Co, Mn, Al, Si, Ga, Ge, Sc, Y, La, Ce, Pr, Mg, Ca, Sr, Ba, In, Sn, Sb and Bi.

Claim 8 (currently amended): The method according to claim 5, ~~wherein the catalyst contains pores having a 0.1 to 10 μm pore diameter and a specific pore volume,~~ wherein the specific pore volume is decreased to a range of 0.01 to 0.5 ml/g after at least one element selected from the group consisting of Ti, Zr, Hf, Nb, Ta, Fe, Co, Mn, Al, Si, Ga, Ge, Sc, Y, La, Ce, Pr, Mg, Ca, Sr, Ba, In, Sn, Sb and Bi is deposited on the activated carbon when compared with the specific pore volume before the element is deposited.

Claim 9 (previously presented): The method according to claim 5, wherein the catalyst has a specific surface area, wherein the specific surface area is decreased to a range of 50 to 800 m^2/g after at least one element selected from the group consisting of Ti, Zr, Hf, Nb, Ta, Fe, Co, Mn, Al, Si, Ga, Ge, Sc, Y, La, Ce, Pr, Mg, Ca, Sr, Ba, In, Sn, Sb and Bi is deposited on the activated carbon when compared with the specific surface area before the element is deposited.

Claim 10 (previously presented): The method according to claim 5, wherein the amount of the oxygen containing gas which is added is controlled so that the amount of oxygen in the oxygen containing gas relative to the oxygen demand of the waste water at maximum waste water treatment efficiency is a ratio of 0.8:1 to 1.3:1.

Claim 11 (original): The method according to claim 5, wherein the oxygen containing gas and the waste water descend concurrently at the catalyst.

Claim 12 (previously presented): The method according to claim 5, wherein the oxygen containing gas is supplied from at least two locations by dividing the total amount of the oxygen containing gas.

Claim 13 (currently amended): A method for oxidizing and/or decomposing organic and/or inorganic oxidizable substances in waste water by wet oxidation with a use of a catalyst, which comprises:

oxidizing and/or decomposing the oxidizable substances with an oxygen containing gas in the presence of the catalyst under pressure, wherein the waste water remains in a liquid phase at a temperature of 50 to less than 170°C, wherein the catalyst contains activated carbon and at least one element selected from the group consisting of Pt, Pd, Rh, Ru, Ir and Au, and wherein the catalyst contains pores having a pore diameter in a range of 0.1 to 10 μm and a specific pore volume in a range of 0.1 to 0.8 ml/g; and

adding a catalyst protection liquid which contains easily decomposable substances at the time of a temperature increase during the commencement of the wet oxidation and/or at the time of a temperature decrease when wet oxidation is suspended.

Claim 14 (previously presented): The method according to claim 13, wherein the amount of the catalyst protection liquid which is added is controlled so that the easily decomposable substances in the protection liquid remain in a liquid phase when passed through the catalyst.

Claim 15 (previously presented): The method according to claim 13, wherein the temperature at which the catalyst protection liquid is added is lower than the temperature at which the waste water is treated.

Claim 16 (previously presented): The method according to claim 13, wherein the step of oxidizing and/or decomposing the oxidizable substances with the oxygen containing gas produces an exhaust gas, and wherein the concentration of oxygen in the exhaust gas is controlled in a range of 0 to 5 vol% at the time of a temperature increase during the commencement of the wet oxidation and/or at the time of a temperature decrease when wet oxidation is suspended.

Claim 17 (previously presented): The method according to claim 13, wherein the amount of the oxygen containing gas which is added is controlled so that the amount of oxygen in the oxygen containing gas relative to the oxygen demand of the protection liquid at maximum catalyst protecting efficiency when the catalyst protection liquid is added is a ratio of 0:1 to 1.3:1.

Claim 18 (currently amended): A method for oxidizing and/or decomposing organic and/or inorganic oxidizable substances in waste water by wet oxidation with a use of a catalyst, which comprises:

oxidizing and/or decomposing the oxidizable substances with an oxygen containing gas in the presence of a catalyst under pressure, wherein the waste water remains in a liquid phase at a

oxidizing and/or decomposing the oxidizable substances with an oxygen containing gas in the presence of a catalyst under pressure, wherein the waste water remains in a liquid phase at a temperature of 50 to less than 170°C, wherein the catalyst contains activated carbon and at least one element selected from the group consisting of Pt, Pd, Rh, Ru, Ir and Au, and wherein the catalyst contains pores having a pore diameter in a range of 0.1 to 10 μm and a specific pore volume in a range of 0.1 to 0.8 ml/g; and

adding a catalyst recovering liquid which contains easily decomposable substances to the catalyst at a temperature in the range from 55°C to less than 200°C.

Claim 19 (previously presented): The method according to claim 18, wherein the amount of the catalyst recovering liquid which is added is controlled so that the easily decomposable substances in the recovering liquid remain in a liquid phase when passed through the catalyst.

Claim 20 (previously presented): The method according to claim 18, wherein the amount of the oxygen containing gas is controlled so that the amount of oxygen in the oxygen containing gas relative to the oxygen demand of the protection liquid at maximum catalyst protecting efficiency when the catalyst protection liquid is added is a ratio of 0:1 to 1.3:1.